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Educational Writings

REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTES

School survey of a medium-sized city.—The "Educational Survey Series" has recently been extended by the addition of an eighth volume¹ which gives a complete study of the administration of the school system of Boise, Idaho. This survey is general in type and covers, in a well-balanced treatment, the various factors of school administration. It was authorized by the school board in April, 1919, and the final report of the staff was submitted in December of the same year.

In gathering its data, the survey staff "spent approximately two weeks, beginning May 19, in active study and observation of the schools in operation. During that time conferences were held with your board, with the superintendent of schools, and with numerous school principals and other school officers; careful examination was made of financial and educational records, together with the systems used in reporting, recording, filing, and using such data; the whole school plant was thoroughly examined; standard tests were applied in three different subjects to a large number of children in the elementary schools; and numerous observations were made of classroom instruction" (p. v).

After a preliminary chapter dealing with the general problem of education in Boise, the survey presents a study of "Organization and Administration" and "The Teaching Staff." The most outstanding criticism in these chapters relates to the form of supervision of instruction, which rests almost entirely in the hands of the general superintendent. Teaching work is required of all elementary principals, which practically reduces them to the capacity of head-teachers. Only three special supervisors were employed in the entire system. This system of supervision, the survey points out, is entirely inadequate for a city of 35,000 population.

Chapters iv and v deal with the "Curriculum" and "Efficiency of Instruction." The survey staff suggests the enlargement of the curriculum by the addition of more practical arts courses and recommends that "early steps be taken to establish an intermediate or a junior high school, consisting of Grades 7, 8, and 9, and that large place be provided in its curriculum for such courses as those just suggested, to the end that many of Boise's children may have as good training for *life* as the "few" now have for *higher study*" (p. 81). In

¹ J. B. SEARS, WILLIAM M. PROCTOR, and J. HAROLD WILLIAMS, *The Boise Survey*. Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Co., 1920. Pp. viii+290. \$2.25.

measuring the efficiency of instruction, standardized tests were given in writing, spelling, and arithmetic. The tests used were the Ayres Writing Scale (Gettysburg edition), the Ayres Spelling Scale, and the Cleveland Arithmetic Tests.

The next three chapters are devoted to the school children, studying the "Progress of the Children in the Schools," "Individual Differences among the Children," and "The Children's Health." The chapter on health contains a great deal of concrete material and presents a careful analysis of the problem. The method of supervision of janitors, who are entirely free from control by the principal-teachers, seems to be responsible for some of the conditions criticized. In chapter ix, entitled "Buildings and Grounds," the survey staff makes use of the Strayer Score Card for City School Buildings. The remaining chapters of the book deal with the "High School," "Educational and Vocational Guidance," and "Costs and Business Management." In the chapter on the high school a strong argument is presented for the establishment of a junior college. The fact that Boise is so isolated from institutions of higher learning serves to emphasize the need for this extension of the public-school system.

As a whole, the book presents a very compact and well-organized survey. It is written in a style that can be appreciated by the average teacher or layman. As an example of a brief, clear school report it will be of interest to many superintendents and principals.

French writer on child growth.—It is unfortunate that many excellent books on education which are written in foreign countries are inaccessible to American readers because of differences in language. Some large agency for selecting and translating outstanding foreign contributions would render a needed service. An example of such service is furnished by Mr. S. L. Eby in his translation of one of the works of an eminent French scientist, Dr. Godin. The translation of this book¹ introduces American readers to the work of a writer who has for years been a careful student of the science of education, and whose work has won recognition from the highest scientific societies in France. It also serves to direct the attention of American students to the trend of thought on the theory and practice of education in that country.

One of the criticisms of many of the studies of the physical growth and development of children is that such studies have measured large groups of children for each age, computed the average or median for each group, and then used the results as norms for studying the development of an individual child. Such investigations have limited scientific value. The view presented by Dr. Godin is expressed as follows:

The only physical measurements worth while are those which admit of comparisons with previous states of development of the same individual. Such comparisons

¹ PAUL GODIN, *Growth During School Age*. Boston: Richard G. Badger, 1920. Pp. 268. \$3.00.